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ABSTRACT

This document outlines the goals and structure of the Direct Care Workers Program (DCWP) sponsored by the Borough of Manhattan Community College (New York). The program targeted bilingual students with poor academic experience living in New York City and offered 6 months of bilingual vocational training as paraprofessionals in the field of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The program was organized in four phases: (1) recruitment, orientation, assessment, and admission of students; (2) 20 weeks of coursework and review of basic study skills; (3) 126-hour internship; and (4) 4 weeks of job search and placement sessions. Graduates received three college credits and certifications in Crisis Intervention and Prevention, Medication Administration, Sign Language, and Direct Care. Support services offered to DCWP participants included financial aid packages (tuition and limited school supplies), skills evaluation, review of study skills, and job search preparation. DCWP measured success by evaluating the rates of retention, graduation, and employment. Thirty students enrolled in the program in September 1996; 20 students completed the coursework and 19 students completed Phase 3 and Phase 4 (80% retention rate). This report cites a 63% percent placement rate for program graduates. Appended is the interview protocol. (RC)

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Bilingual Vocational Training as a Pathway to Industry: The Direct Care Worker Program of the Borough of Manhattan Community College

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Edwin Meléndez

Principal Investigator

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Summary

The Direct Care Workers Program (DCWP) of the Borough of Manhattan Community College offers a classic example of the role that community colleges can play in providing disadvantaged Hispanics a pathway to industry. In this program nineteen students completed a six-month bilingual vocational training as paraprofessionals in the field of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The program, designed and taught by instructors with many years of experience in the developmental disabilities and mental retardation field, provided training, financial and academic assistance, and an internship in a community residence or treatment agency. The program also offered ongoing supervision and advocacy to participating students.

The DCWP was designed as an entry point for a career ladder in the health industry. The program targeted bilingual students with poor academic experience living in New York City. As such, it facilitated access to college all the while training them with skills demanded by industry. The program combined English language skill development as part of job-related content teaching and basic academic skills. Contextual and experiential learning was structured by combining classroom instruction with 126-hour internship with regional employers. By the end of the program, students were successfully matched to employers, and earned 3 state certifications, and 3 credits towards a college degree.

The DCWP was very successful as indicated by conventional outcome measures, such as an 80 percent retention rate and a 63 percent work placement rate. In interviews

with program staff, students, employers, and other sources familiar with the program, this success is attributed to a number of methods (by now well documented) associated with best practice training programs. These practices include a strict selection of students based on early orientation and counseling, the integration of basic education, language acquisition, vocational education and counseling; team teaching as support services; and the active participation and connection to employers and industry.

Introduction

The Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) Direct Care Worker Program was designed as part of an effort to develop short-term bilingual vocational training programs that could result in entry-level employment in fields that offer career opportunities as well as financial security. The program trained bilingual or Spanish-speaking students in the fundamentals of providing daily caring for clients with mental retardation or developmental disabilities. The training offered by the program allowed students to receive certifications in Crisis Intervention and Prevention, Medication Administration, Sign Language, and Direct Care, by attending 20 weeks of classes and 4 weeks of job search and placement. English-language proficiency was developed in the context of job-related instruction. The program also included a 126-hour internship at community residences or agencies serving clients with mental or developmental disabilities.

Encouraged by a number of market indicators, and industry contacts that suggested there was a strong need for bilingual paraprofessionals in Human Services BMCC developed the training of care workers in the area of Developmental Disabilities and Mental Retardation (DDMR). The Direct Care Workers Program benefited from the college's expertise in the health care area. The program targeted the growing number of unemployed bilingual and Spanish-speaking Hispanic clients on welfare who were required to participate in the college's job readiness program. The program also attracted Hispanic students enrolled in the college. In the spring 1995 semester, Hispanic students at BMCC numbered 4,010, accounting for more than 27 percent of the total student enrollment.

A report issued by the Hispanic American Almanac indicated that in 1989 almost 24 percent of Hispanic families were living below the poverty level, twice the level for non-Hispanics. These rates show some variance; for instance, more that 40 percent of Puerto Rican families live below the poverty level, followed by 28 percent of Mexican families, 25 percent of Central and South American families and 17 percent of Cuban families. According to 1990 US census figures, there are 1,783,511 persons of Hispanic descent living in New York City, comprising about one quarter of the city's total population. By the year 2000, it is expected that one out of every three New Yorkers will be of Hispanic origin. The Hispanic community in New York is not only growing in numbers but also in diversity. There is heavy immigration from South America and the Caribbean, although Puerto Ricans remain the largest group, followed by Dominicans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Mexicans, and Cubans. Hispanic New Yorkers have a high degree of labor force involvement and an over-representation in the manufacturing sector. However, the dramatic changes currently taking place in the economy of the Unites States is reducing in the number of manufacturing jobs. These changes

favor service industries, and the development of an information-based economy. As a result, while Hispanics are the fastest growing group in the labor force, they also lag behind other groups in their level of economic prosperity. The economy of New York City has rebounded after the crisis of 1970, but nevertheless, the restructuring of the city's economy has resulted in the elimination of large number of manufacturing jobs traditionally held by Hispanics as well as other immigrant groups. The poverty levels in the city mirror national figures, with Hispanic over-represented in occupations requiring limited work skills, and strikingly under-represented in high-paying occupations.

The Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York opened in 1964 as a small, business-oriented community college. The college's primary focus was to prepare students for business careers, and to provide a general liberal arts education for those wishing to transfer to four-year colleges. The mission of the college changed in response to the advent of the City University's open admissions policy in 1970 and in response to the emergence of new technologies and changes in business and industry. Open admissions extended higher educational opportunities to thousand of students, many of whom were considered non-traditional. In 1983, when the college relocated to its current site in Chambers Street, college programs became more diversified.

Currently the college has an enrollment of 16,000 students in credit programs leading to Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science degrees. These degree programs include Accounting, Allied Health Sciences, Business Administration, Business Management, Computer Management and Computer Operations, Computer Science, Early Childhood Education, Engineering Science, Human Services, Liberal Arts, Mathematics, and Nursing. The college also offers many non-degree programs in Adult and Continuing Education.

The Direct Care Worker Training Program at BMCC responds to emerging needs taking place in the nation and at the community levels. On the one hand there is an increasing need to provide culturally sensitive, bilingual, paraprofessional services to individuals with disabilities, while on the other, the impact of "de-institutionalization," the implementation of Early Intervention legislation and the home- and community-based Medicaid waivers demands skilled, responsible paraprofessionals. BMCC has been offering educational services to the Hispanic community for a number of years. In 1991, in collaboration with New York City's Human Resources Administration, BMCC piloted the first Spanish Job Club. The club provided employment training for Spanish-speaking participants. BMCC also operates a BEGIN Language Immersion Program, designed to prepare economically disadvantaged Hispanic adults for eventual employment. In 1993, this program added an employment requirement That same year, the Comprehensive Employment Opportunities and Support Center was created in order to expand employment services to its economically disadvantaged clients. The program serves a high percentage of Hispanic clients. BMCC's Direct Care Workers Training Program has integrated in its curriculum an English-language acquisition component with job-specific training.

The underlying methodological assumption of the program is that students benefic from language instruction that takes place in the context of a work setting. By

extension, the Direct Care Workers program places English-language instruction in the context of students' training for paraprofessionals in the DDMR field.

Beyond these methodological considerations, Diane Garrett, DCW program coordinator, conceptualizes the paraprofessional training of the program as an entry point to the job market for disadvantaged populations. She further envisions the program as an entry point into a more general paraprofessional health field that involves other areas such as Gerontology, services to patients with AIDS, as well as other human services specialties. She feels, nevertheless that, at this point in their lives, students of the program are more interested in reaching that entry into the job market. She argues that it is very difficult for a student to conceive attending college when they are unemployed, receiving public assistance, or when they have not received their high school diploma or GED. Once students deal with their priority of getting a job, then they can think about advancement in that field and maybe later pursue an associate's degree. Daniel Garcia, a graduate of the DCW program currently working at the Training and Rehabilitation in Useful Service (TRIUS) agency in Brooklyn, agrees with this observation. Daniel acts very confident and comfortable in the job, and since he has received high praises and promises of a pay raise he has expressed the desire to remain in that job for a while. Daniel worked in his previous job, a manufacturing company, for 6 years. At the time he was accepted in the DCW program Daniel didn't have a high school diploma or GED. However, he feels that the training he received, in particular the Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP) class gave him the edge in the job. Currently, he is not interested in further training at the college level, although he can envision further training to enhance his level of paraprofessional competency.

Clearly then, while the program is designed as a point of entry to the job market, it can only be considered a point of entry to higher education by reason that students receive courses offered in a college campus. The program also offers three college-credits to graduates, which can be applied towards an associate's degree in Human Services. Further, according to Manuel Elias, the program counselor, if students were to take an additional three-credit class in Early Childhood Education, and then get a job as paraprofessionals working for the Board of Education, they would qualify to receive financial support while working in order to complete their education.

Support Services

The support services offered at the DCW program include a financial aid package, academic support, group and personalized case management, and job placement.

Financial Aid Package

Ms. Garrett, the DCW program coordinator, calculated the cost of the program at about $4,000 to 5,000 per student, which she considers fairly expensive. As it is then, enrollment in the program can only be supported through grants. Although BMCC ran a Direct Care Workers program for the last three years, BMCC used the HACU grant to provide scholarships for the students, which covered tuition, and limited school supplies. The grant also allowed the program to advertise more extensively and to get some students who were not on public assistance. This is significant in as much as

half of their students were not in public assistance at the time they enrolled in the program, and those who left the program were precisely the students who were on public assistance. Laura Torres, job developer for the program, offered the insight that students who were not on public assistance were younger, seemed more motivated to work in the field and saw the program as part of their career development.

It is also possible that students on public assistance confront many more financial limitations, or are more easily derailed by temporary crises because they may have limited sources of support. For instance, while the scholarships made it possible for many students to attend the training program, there were some students who, because of their circumstances, experienced extreme financial barriers. Vilma Pasos, a graduate of the program who at the time of the interview in 1997 was working at Builders for Family and Youth in Brooklyn, the site where she interned, considered withdrawing from the program because of her inability to get bus fare to get to the college. Some of her classmates encouraged her to continue, offering to help her out with the fare. Vilma Pasos was born in Puerto Rico but had lived most of her life in New York City. She had been working full time for 6 months with about 10 MRDD clients ranging in ages from 38 to 60. She has two sons, 18 and 12 years old. Before attending the DCW program she had been receiving public assistance. She had attempted to get a job in human services, but was discouraged by the requirement for experience. Although Vilma attended the informational meeting, took the assessment test and qualified to enroll in the DCW program, she still had to convince the welfare office that enrollment in the DCW program was a better choice than taking a temporary job assignment that did not lead to permanent employment. She was scheduled to have a hearing with the welfare office to discuss the issue of choosing training over a temporary job, but by the time of the scheduled hearing she had already completed the DCW program. Nevertheless, Vilma had to struggle with the department of Public Assistance in order to remain in the DCW program. Vilma credits the encouragement she received from the program staff as the element that allowed her to graduate. She particularly identified program coordinator Diane Garrett, and instructor Nadia Valen, with providing lots of encouragement, as well as some of the people she worked with at her internship.

Academic Support and Academic Advice

As part of the recruitment process the DCW program offered career orientation and skills evaluations. The pre-enrollment orientation consisted primarily of video presentations, which detailed the type of work performed by direct care workers, as well as the settings and populations with whom they work. These presentations discouraged a number of applicants who felt they could not deal with the settings, the clients, or the working conditions. All interested participants met with a counselor and were given assessment tests. Program Coordinator Diane Garretts interviewed prospective students who remained interested after the first orientation. She was responsible for the bilingual instruction, as the ESL instructor, and the person who evaluated, using a non-standardized approach, the Spanish, English, and Math proficiency of all prospective students. For students who lacked a high school diploma the program provided GED instruction in Spanish and English.

The program, recognizing that many of the students had been away from a classroom for a significant length of time, or had negative experiences with formal education, offered a few orientation sessions, and a review of study skills, before classes started. For the same reason, course work was introduced gradually. Students benefited from the team approach of the program, receiving support and encouragement from instructors and counselors. Students also discovered that classmates were one of their best academic resources. Those who were English-language proficient helped those who were less so. In turn students who had limited English-language proficiency, but had previous health care work experience, helped their classmates understand clinical issues such as medicine administration and related problems.

According to Ms. Garrett, the profile of HACU student is broad: Some students came to the program with an 8th grade education while others had finished college in their home country. For instance, Janice Garro, a 23-year-old native New Yorker of Puerto Rican background, was referred to the program by BMCC Department of Human Services, where she had been enrolled. Janice was familiar with the university system, and committed to working in the field of Human Services. She entered the program with sufficient English skills and well-developed study habits. Upon graduation, Janice was hired as a Direct Care Worker at the Puerto Rican Family Institute. The agency serves approximately 20 mentally retarded clients, and in spite of its name, the agency serves clients from diverse nationalities and backgrounds. Her responsibilities include assisting clients in their daily living skills, cooking and cleaning, medication administration, as well as providing advocacy and counseling.

On the other hand, Leticia Aguilar, a 30-year-old student born in Puerto Rico has a very different background. Leticia moved to New York City in 1990 where she lives with her young daughter. Although she was receiving public assistance, she also worked as a volunteer in a variety of occupations. Leticia had taken several English language courses, at the Spanish-American Institute and at the BEGIN language program, also sponsored by BMCC, but she acknowledged that before enrolling at the DCW program she felt very insecure about communicating in English. She mentioned the English study groups led by her DCW classmate Janice Garro as particularly helpful. Leticia recently received her GED, but she was not working in the field because of her inability to secure day care for her daughter.

Before students start their internships, they participate in site visits to a residence and a day treatment center, in order to see first-hand the work of Direct Care Workers, and also to become familiar with the home-style care many agencies provide for their clients. When internships start, students continue attending classes in the morning, three days a week. Many of these classes deal with on-the-job circumstances students experience as they fulfill their responsibilities in the internship. Further, the program's job developer and counselor visit the different sites to monitor students' performance and the working conditions. They act as students' advocates. However, in the case of a poor match, the job developer works with the agency to find a better match, and also works with the student to discuss the nature of the mismatch and arrange another internship site.

Finally, at the end of the internship, and before graduation, the program focuses on job readiness. Classes and internships are followed by 4 weeks of job search and placement. Students receive instruction on résumé preparation and interview skills. Students attend mock interview sessions, and produce résumés that are kept on file and used by the career services, also provided by the program.

Case Management/Personal and Life Issues

According to the program's counselor Manuel Elias, the director, instructors, and job developer act as a team in providing the students as much support and encouragement as possible, allowing the students to realize that the program is very much interested in their success. As a team they emphasize participation in the program only as a step in a ladder toward either career or educational development. The integration of instruction and counseling is an important program design characteristic.

Manuel Elias is a native New Yorker from Puerto Rican and Dominican background. He graduated from SUNY at Stoney Brook with a major in Psychology in 1993, and began working at the BMCC in 1995 as counselor and instructor. Prior to his present job he worked as case manager and program coordinator at the Highbridge Community Life Center in the Bronx. He provided life skills training, a series of workshops on particular issues of interest, and along with the job developer, visited the different internship sites. They use these visits to interact with the students in the context of a work site to determine the fit of the student with the agency, and also to discuss students' performance with the intern's supervisor. He sees his role as counselor as a student advocate and mentor.

Since many of the students in the program were single mothers with children, Manuel was of the opinion that the successful student is one who has an adequate support system. Usually this means childcare, housing, transportation, food stamps, and assistance. He also underscores the need for a back-up support system in case the current system fails. That belief is reflected in the type of questions that prospective students were asked during orientation. Regarding childcare, for example, students were asked to name the person who would take care of their children if their current sitter became unavailable.

Among the obstacles that students experience as they enter the DCW program, counselor Manuel Elias listed the following:

- Students have been out of school for many years
- They experience the academic setting as challenging
- They have difficulties taking written exams
- They have serious family problems
- They lack an efficient support service

In response to these challenges, the program provided orientation through life skills courses or workshops, and in some cases offered referrals to a service agency. Ms. Garrett, the program coordinator, feels that in fact, it is personal issues what prevents students from finishing the program. These problems tend to be multifaceted and represent a big challenge to the counselor.

Internship and Job Placement

A significant component of the DCW training program is the 126 hours direct work experience that students can earn through internships at specific work sites. This component of the program is particularly important because job experience is a requirement of many agencies. In fact, several of the students in the program had been interested in pursuing work in the field but were turned away because of their lack of experience.

Job Developer Laura Torres is the person responsible for contacting residencies where students can do their internship. Laura Torres is a native New Yorker from Puerto Rican background. She works full time as Job Developer and counselor, providing day-to-day assistance to the students, as well as providing follow-up and continuity to the program. She maintains the file of students, current phone numbers, students' résumés, and place of employment. She also receives listings of jobs in the field of direct care, and is contacted by different residential agencies when there are employment openings. Ms. Torres had been at this job about a year. She started working at the time the USDOL grant was approved. Previously, she had worked for other social agencies.

In order to arrange internship for students Ms. Torres contacted residencies approached by previous coordinators, which already had a relationship with BMCC and with the Department of Continuing Education. In addition, she contacted new residencies. Students also provide information on residences that serve MRDD clients in their neighborhoods. By establishing contact with these residencies, students can do their internship close to home, thus minimizing travel time. Ms. Torres sees her responsibilities as two-fold: she sets up career planning sessions to discuss what students envision for their future, and what they need in order to get there. She also works with different agencies to determine the type of intern and worker they need, the type of training their employees must have in order to maximize the fit with the agency. She also discusses the possibility of advancement in that agency. When setting up internships she is primarily interested in finding a place close to students' homes, because often students must work late, but when discussing job opportunities she is more interested in salary and possibility for advancement. Because of her role, Ms. Torres stays in contact with many students. She maintains a file of 200 graduates and provides career support services to DCW graduates. In essence, Ms. Torres is the point person within the program whose main function is to match students to employers.

To underscore the success of the program, Ms. Torres sketched the individual success of three students, Rosa Galan, Sara Gomez, and Daniel Garcia, which she argues, was made possible by their participation in the program. Rosa Galan, was an older student, working at the Queens School for Special Children. When she started the program, in addition to her age, she had language barriers and apprehensions about returning to school. She overcame all these limitations and now she has her driver's license (a requirement in many agencies) and supervises a group of MRDD clients as they perform paid jobs. In addition to supervision, she must drive clients to their work site, and at the end of the day she must drive them to their residences. Sara Gomez, had been a nurse in her native Honduras, but was unable to find work in the United States, and at one point became homeless. She was working at the Association for the Help of Retarded Children in Far Rockaway, New York, where she did her internship.

Upon graduation she became a per diem worker, and now is permanently employed at that agency. Daniel Garcia was the first graduate to get a job. He was hired by the Training and Rehabilitation in Useful Service (TRIUS) agency in Brooklyn, where he had interned. This demand for his service improved his self-esteem dramatically, particularly since at the time he was hired he didn't have his driver's license or GED. However, because of the high demand for men with training in the field, the agency waived those requirements. He started working as on-call direct care worker and now he has assumed some supervisory roles. As most graduates from the program, these students had a job before graduation or had been placed in jobs shortly after graduation.

Structural Changes at the University Level

The DCW bilingual vocational training program integrates the roles of program coordinator, counselors, instructors, and a job developer. This structure guarantees that each component is integrated into the fabric of the program without diluting the focus of the instruction. Case management and counseling help students deal with personal issues or barriers, which get in the way of completing the program or finding a job upon graduation.

Curricular Changes

The DCW program was designed to provide bilingual vocational training to Hispanic students. As a result courses are structured in such a way as to help students simultaneously develop English-language fluency as well as learn health care skills. The integration of language skills begins with the study of MRDD language, a review of phonics, and basic writing skills. Instructors in turn must have skills and experience teaching content courses to bilingual students. Before the beginning of classes instructors attended a review session to discuss ways the curriculum could be revised in order to facilitate its use in a bilingual context. This process sensitized instructors to the issues of including language skill development as part of content teaching. In some cases, technical material was translated into Spanish in order to facilitate the learning process. That was the case of the Medication Administration textbook.

The actual curriculum is sufficiently flexible to allow for different levels of skills among students. For example, Janice Garro, whose first language is English and who had transferred from the Human Services Department with college level English fluency found the English instruction redundant. She was allowed to take computer literacy instead. That course, offered to a different group of students within the program, started a few weeks later that the DCW program. Rosalind Norwell, director of Student Support Services, values the uniqueness of the program in the university because, she argues, it offers bilingual training to individuals in public assistance. Both Diane Garrett, program coordinator and Ms. Norwell commented that once enrolled in the program students learn to value even more the bilingual skill they posses.

The success of the DCW program is ultimately measured in terms of students' job placement (i.e. "your first paycheck is your diploma" approach). The curriculum therefore attempts to provide the skills most needed by employers in the field of disabled patient care. The training provided by the DCW programs provides certifications in several competencies including:

- Direct Care,
- Medication Administration,
- Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP),
- Sign Language, and
- CPR/First Aid.

Although there isn't currently a standardized certification in direct care, several competencies are measured by federal examinations, as is the case for Medication Administration and SCIP. While there isn't a certification for the package training offered by the BMCC, Diane Garrett, the program coordinator, articulated the hope that as the services and training offered by the program becomes accepted by practitioners, it may became the standard for this particular career path.

The instructors bring to the program their many years of experience working in the field. Nadia Valen, the lead instructor for the DCW program at BMCC, has been working in the field of Human Services and MRDD for the last 21 years. Nadia has a BA in Psychology from Ramapo College in New Jersey and an MA in Public Administration from Long Island University. In addition to the courses she teaches at BMCC she has worked at the Manhattan Development Service Office since 1985 where she was Program Manager, Administrative Services Supervisor, and Executive Assistant in the Director's Office. She entered the field as a DCW and since then she has taken most, if not all, the responsibilities of operating a residential home. At the DCW program she teaches courses of Developmental Disabilities, Acting Treatment, Recreation Services, Nutrition, OSHA Regulations, Stress Management, and Human Sexuality.

Susan Green, a part-time instructor, also has close to 20 years experience working in residential settings. Susan graduated in 1977 with a MSW from Fordham University, and holds BS in Psychology from Richmond College. She has been Clinical Coordinator for the Metro North Intermediate Care Facility of New York since 1989. Previously she was Residence Social Worker at the same facility, and has worked as an instructor at the BMCC since 1991. In addition to the work she did with the HACU group, she has trained students from the Housing Program, a longer running program at BMCC sponsored by the city. She teaches Daily Living Skills, which teaches students how to teach clients the skills necessary for independent living. She also teaches Reporting & Record Keeping, Human Sexuality, and Family Dynamics workshops.

In terms of the future, instructor Nadia Valen expressed the hoped that the program could be expanded to give many more students the opportunity to work in the field of human services and health care. Daily interactions with the students allowed instructor Nadia Valen to recognize other needs that a longer program could fulfill. In particular she referred to stress management and self-esteem issues. In many instances, she thought that student felt intimidated in the classroom, either because of the years that students have spent away from the classroom or from negative past classroom experiences. In addition to shyness in the classroom, Nadia identified problems of low self-esteem resulting from the stigma associated with unemployment and dependency on public assistance. She described the feelings of discomfort and stress that compelled one of her students, Leticia Aguilar, to ask her many questions. In the case of Daniel Garcia, another students, she suspected that conflicting family relations might have

undermined his sense of worth. Further, she wished that the program could offer continual referrals and services to its graduates. She feels that the program could offer a post-graduation series of management workshop as a way of preparing them to take management responsibilities in the not so distant future. In the short run, instructor Valen believes that students could benefit from special workshops in assertiveness training, which could give them different ways to approach supervisors in a non-confrontational manner, to discuss a variety of issues that may include pay-raises as well as other job-related issues.

The only adaptation or change that instructor Susan Green recalls instituting in the program had to do with the duration of her Living Skills class, which focuses on teaching clients the skills necessary to live independently. Ms. Green indicated that in the past her course was 2 hours per day, but that she changed it to 1.5-hour duration. She estimated that the duration of the class worked well for this group. The Living Skills course comprises approximately 10 hrs in the curriculum, and instructor Susan Green recalled that the DCWP students acquired the basics rather quickly, or quicker that when she taught the same class to EDGE students (EDGE students are English proficient). Once students mastered the basics the rest of the time was used to discuss cases and deal with more specific questions. Ms. Green speculated that either the initial screening selected a very committed group of students that were able to assimilate the material quickly, or since many of the students were parents, they were able to transfer parental skills to their job. While, in her opinion, parental skill can become a liability in the field –if students became too attached to clients, or if students try to do everything for the client– by and large she felt that in the classroom the transfer of parental skills enhances the learning process.

Administrative changes

Organizationally, the DCW program falls under the jurisdiction of the college's department of Adult and Continuing Education. Donna Bailey, director of Adult and Continuing Education, conceptualizes the DCW program as a bridge linking the instruction provided by academic institutions and the requirements and skills demanded by today's employers. She sees the DCW program as a response that a college can provide to the problem of unemployment and underemployment among the Latino population. She argues that, given the changes taking place in the economy, the training package that the DCW program has put together clearly responds to the needs of the employers in that field. She described her experience in the private sector, before she began working for BMCC, as instrumental in allowing her to see the need to integrate the demands of a workplace with the training provided by educational institutions.

Gloria Soldano, dean of Adult and Continuing Education, agreed with the assessment that there is a divide separating the content and style of university and college training and the needs and requirements of the workplace. Although Dean Soldano postulated that many factors likely caused the divide between academy and workplace, but nevertheless she felt that the relative success of the DCW program was a strong indicator that they were on the right track. She found the accomplishments of the program encouraging, which she said indicated that the training and approach

provided by the DCW was an example worth emulating. The success of this program therefore may have significant repercussions at the institutional level.

By and large, then, both Dean Gloria Soldano and Director of Adult and Continuing Education Donna Bailey had been strong supporters of the DCW program and very interested in its success. Their arguments for a program that offers entry into the workplace in the area of Human Services as well as re-entry into the educational system is reflected in the content of the program's curriculum. In turn, the program seems to have benefited from this level of administrative support, which gives added confidence to program counselor and instructors.

Use of New Academic and Evaluation Approaches

Nadia Valen, the lead instructor for the DCW program, feels that some of the valuable skills that the students bring to Human Services, in particular skills developed raising a family, need to be recognized by the instructors, as well as by the students. Susan Green, an instructor in the program, concurs with this observation, noting that, since the majority of students are parents, they are able to transfer parenting skills into their job. She identified the ability to be caring, patient and nurturing, particularly while teaching essential tasks, as intrinsic skills needed in good parenting. Both instructors felt that these skills made it possible for the students to acquire the basics of direct care work rather quickly.

It is significant that program instructors tried to recognize the skills that adult students bring into the classroom, skills that students develop as part of their life experiences, and in previous jobs. This attitude may allow instructor to develop a stronger connection or understanding of the students that can only enhance the learning process. In truth, there are many ways in which individual experiences may enhance classroom learning and new training practices in a variety of fields. A case in point: Vilma Pasos, a graduate of the program who has a developmentally disabled person in her family found the internship the most natural component of her training. While she experience some difficulties writing reports and with the SCIP training, she was quite comfortable with MRDD clients.

Another skill that students brought to the classroom as identified by instructors Nadia Valen and Susan Green, was the ability of the students to collaborate with one another. Ms. Valen calls this the ability to "network." She illustrates this point by describing instances of students with limited English proficiency receiving help and encouragement from native English speakers. When students with limited English skills wanted to ask questions in class their classmates either translated the questions or encouraged them to ask the questions directly, thus helping them overcome their initial reticence. This is particularly relevant for a program that attempts to provide bilingual vocational training by instructors who are not fully bilingual. Although instructors Nadia Valen and Susan Green have over 20 years experience in the field neither of them is fully bilingual. Leticia Aguilar, a Puerto Rican graduate of the DCW program, who moved to New York City in 1990, acknowledges that before enrolling at the program she felt very insecure about communicating in English. Now Leticia exhibits fluidity and ease in communicating in both languages. She credits the staff with providing day-

to-day support and encouragement. She also credits the help of some of her classmates who were very generous with their time and support. In particular she acknowledged the benefits of the English study groups led by classmate Janice Garro. Students organized the English study group independent from the official program.

The field experience that the instructors bring to the classroom enhances the level of instruction and feedback that students receive. Instructor Nadia Valen was able to determine that students were developing the skills needed in the field in spite of the discomfort her students experienced in the classroom. Her many years of experience gave her confidence and the ability to transmit that confidence to her students. She encouraged students' feedback, not only in relation to their experiences in the classroom but also in relation to their internship activities. This approach allowed her to discuss the different experiences that students had during their internships, resulting from the different degrees of clients' disability, or from the different residential approaches of the administration or the staff. She tried to clarify for the students the reasons for and source of these differences. She also lets students know that they may experience some animosity from coworker due to the training they bring, training that fellow workers often lack.

Links between the University and Industry

The links between the university and industry occur at different levels and at different instances. At the structural level, the program is designed to provide an internship component, which brings students in contact with prospective employers and clients. Consequently, employers can participate in the training of prospective employees while at the same time they can observe their performance on the job. The DCW program maintains an on-going interaction with the agencies where students conduct their internships in order to ascertain the fit between student and agency, as well as to fine tune the level of students' training required by the employer. This structure receives the support and encouragement at the administrative level. Both the Dean of Continuing Education Gloria Soldano, and the Director of Adult and Continuing Education Donna Bailey, are committed to the development of programs that bridge what they perceive as a divide separating academic training and the needs of industries. To do otherwise, they both feel, would be a disservice to their students. This type of interaction between academic instruction and employers has resulted in a 63 percent employment upon graduation for program participants. College administrators expect that this percentage may increase as graduates overcome other barriers such as completing GEDs, or obtain day care services for their children.

Program Coordinator Diane Garrett identifies another dimension resulting from the development of the DCW program. She hopes that, to the extent that the program becomes better known and their graduates start making their mark in the field, the training the progam offer may become the standard for the profession. Ms. Garrett is encouraged by the support of the new president of the college, who is amenable to the goal of turning BMCC, already one of the largest community colleges in the city, into a grantor of paraprofessional certifications accepted by other colleges and recognized by industry. Part of achieving this goal will be based on the ability of the college to

work with industry leaders to determine their needs in terms of employees' training. The standardization of instruction and services can only result in highly skilled better-trained direct care workers and better services for the clients.

Outcome

From the onset the DCW program was conceived as a short-term bilingual vocational training programs aimed at training disadvantaged Hispanic individuals for entry-level employment in the human services field. As a result the program was structured to teach English language skills in the contextualized setting of a career objective. The program measure its success in terms of the level of retention, graduation, as well as by the numbers of graduates who get jobs. The program is encouraged by a 80 percent graduation rate, and by a 63 employment rate immediately upon graduation.

Graduation Rate

The DCW program began on July 1, 1996, and was divided in four phases. Phase I was dedicated to recruitment, orientation, assessment, and admission of students. Program announcements in Spanish and English were circulated to GED graduates throughout NYC, ESL students at various public libraries, former BMCC students in Human Services, to "Crosswalks" a cable TV program, and to the Consortium of Worker's Education. Program Coordinator Diane Garrett estimated that they received the largest response from their cable TV ad but that many were not qualified to attend the program, and many of those who were qualified were put off by the idea of working with MRDD clients. The orientation session consisted of video presentations showing direct care workers on the job, followed by thorough informational discussions. This information, she added, discourages some applicants who feel that they can not deal with the settings, the clients, or the working conditions. There were two orientation sessions in August and three in September attended by a total of 100 participants. The majority of orientation participants signed up for an interview with counselors, and took assessment tests. At the end of phase I 30 students enrolled in the program.

Phase II started at the end of October with the beginning of classes. Instructors gradually introduced course work, and dedicated a few sessions to orientation and a review of study skills. This approach, as well as the review, was important because many students had been away from a classroom for a significant length of time. Only 25 students started Phase II and by the end of this period only 20 students remained. These 20 students started Phase III of the program, which was marked by the beginning of the internships. Classes continued Monday through Wednesday while the internships for most students were scheduled in the evenings, usually from 3 to 11 p.m. By the end of Phase III, all students completed Sign Language and Medication Administration courses. Those two certificates were presented to students at the time of graduation.

The focus of Phase IV was career readiness and graduation. Students took certification exams for Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP), CPR/First Aid, and the DCW final exam. The 19 students who started Phase IV on February completed the program on March 24, 1997. Thirty students enrolled, but only 25 started classes in October, and by the end of the program 19 students graduated. Those numbers represent

an 80 percent retention rate for the program. According to Ms. Garrett, there are two main reasons why students left the program: Students discovered that they did not like doing direct care work with MRDD clients, or they encountered personal problems that prevented them from finishing the program. The program tried to deal with withdrawals by offering orientation about DCW, providing case management, and counseling.

The thorough orientation and discussions at the beginning of the program tries to present an accurate view of the nature of the work and the conditions paraprofessionals experience in the field. Further, during Phase II of the program and before classes started students participated in on-site visits to two different settings, a residence and a day treatment center. Through the visit to the residences students experienced the home-style setting the agencies provide for the clients, and saw direct care workers at work. After the site visits students had the opportunity to discuss several issues concerning working with clients with retardation. By the time students reached the III stage of the program the majority were eager to start their internship, although at this point a few withdrew from the program, realizing they did not like the nature of direct care work. Those who remained were for the most part fairly committed to the program.

Graduates of the program Daniel Garcia and Vilma Pasos had attempted to get jobs in human services before joining the program but were discouraged by the requirement for experience. They were already committed to working in the field and the program gave them the necessary training and experience. Other students had worked in the health field in their home country. Sara Gomez had been a nurse in her native Honduras, and Ines Gris had trained as a doctor in the Dominican Republic. Elena Casas, Rosa Galan, and Sandra Quiroga had all worked as nurse's aids, and Janice Garro had been enrolled in the Human Services program at BMCC from where she transferred as a result of personal problems. For these students the internship represented a bridge to a job because it allowed them to obtain the work experience required, which for many had stood in the way of getting a job in the field.

As the program progressed, some students experienced personal issues that could prevent them from finishing the program. For example, Vilma Pasos who was on AFDC, had to convince the welfare Department to let her partake in the DCW training program instead of taking a temporary job assignment. Also at a certain point in the middle of the program, she considered withdrawing from the program because of financial problems. She didn't have money for transportation, but some of her classmates encouraged her to continue, and offered to help her out with the bus fares. In cases like this, graduation is a true success.

Employment Rate and Relation to Employers

The structure of the DCW program reflects its focus on employment: The 20 weeks of classes and internship were followed by four weeks of job search and job placement. Towards the end of program, students received intensive career preparation sessions focusing on résumé preparation and interviewing skills. As a result, at the time of our interviews in October 1997, out of the 19 graduates, 12 were already working. According to Job Developer Laura Torres, of those not working one person had immigration problems, one needed child care, one was still experiencing language barriers due to her

limited English skills, and one needed to pass her GED, a requirement in the field. Six students needed to take GED exams, but three already passed it. Leticia Aguilar, who was unemployed, had just passed her GED exam, and was trying to get assistance in her job search, and Daniel Garcia, who failed the GED exam, was already working. Instructor Nadia Valen noted that Daniel failed his GED exam by a few points, that he had not taken the preparation course, but was encouraged to take the test by faculty and friends.

The DCW program maintains very good working relationships with the agencies where students conduct their internships and several have hired program graduates. Five DCW graduates were hired upon graduation by the agencies where they interned. The Shields Institute, the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, Training and Rehabilitation in Useful Service, Builders for Family and Youth, and the Mercy Home for Children all had hired program graduates. Clearly then these agencies found the training provided by the DCW program to fit well with the paraprofessional skills they required of their employees. Given this experience it is possible that these agencies will continue to hire graduates from the DCW program. Conversely, to the extent that the DCW program continues to nurture its relationship with these agencies, their interaction will benefit both parties. The advantage to the students is clear. Students reinforce classroom learning on the job, earn much needed on-the-job experience in the field of human services and have the opportunity to perform on the job and demonstrate their skills, interest, and commitment.

Up-Ranking Within Current Job

Daniel Garcia, the first graduate to receive a job offer, was also the first to assume a supervisory role. Daniel credits the training he received, in particular the Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP) class, for giving him the edge in the job. He mentioned that many of his co-workers who had not received this particular training were insecure or uncomfortable performing in their jobs. He further pointed out that the other person in his agency who exhibited a high level of comfort and preparedness for the job had also received DCW training. This worker was a participant of the Housing program, a DCW training also run by the Department of Continuing Education. Because of his training, Daniel was called upon to supervise some of his coworkers with less training and experience, although he was not promoted to the supervisory position.

According to Daniel's supervisor, he is a hard working person and all around helper. "Daniel is my right arm and my left arm." Low wages and the resulting turnovers are a problem in the industry. Even in the most successful cases, workers in this industry are paid $7 to $8.00 an hour. Daniel felt that, in spite of his DCW training, skills, and responsibilities his income did not increase concomitant with his new roles. Although he values the idea of staying in one job for a while, he expressed interest in looking for better paying jobs that might allow him to use some of the other skills he learned in the program, such as Sign Language and Medication Administration.

In the context of this situation instructor Nadia Valen envisioned a series of other services the program could offer such as continual job referrals and job search services to its graduates. Students could attend special workshops in assertiveness training to develop effective ways to approach supervisor in a non-confrontational

manner regarding job-related issues such as wages and promotions. The program could also bring students back for a series of management workshops to prepare them to take management responsibilities in the not so distant future. These workshops could be offered to all agencies as part of career development for their employees.

Conclusion

The DCW program deserves credit for recognizing that disadvantaged Hispanic students have many needs, which need to be addressed in order to offer a successful, replicable, bilingual vocational program in Human Services or other related occupations. The program responded to the educational needs of the students by providing GED instruction in Spanish and English for those who lacked a high school diploma, and a series of certifications complementing the Direct Care Worker examination. The DCW program benefited from a thorough selection process, from the dedication of the staff, the commitment and experience of the instructors, and perhaps even the cultural homogeneity of the student group. The majority of the students were from Puerto Rican background, although some were born on the island and some in the mainland. There were also a few Dominicans and one Central American. This linguistic and cultural homogeneity might have encouraged the remarkable intra-group cooperation identified by the faculty.

The program responded to the financial need of the students by providing financial assistance. It is clear, however, that different students experienced different levels of need depending on a multiplicity of factors that may include their access to social services as well as the amount of support from family and friends. The integration of instruction, job development, and counseling allowed the program to confront the social and personal barriers experienced by the students. The program coordinator, the job developer and the instructors all played counseling roles, which complemented the role of the program counselor. In addition to Life Skills workshops, students received encouragement and support with academic as well as personal issues that stood in their way of completing the program and reaching graduation.

The results are encouraging: The program boasts a 80 percent graduation rate. Students received certifications in Medication Administration, Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention, Sign Language, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation, and First Aid, in addition to three college-credits for the Direct Care Worker training. The first two certifications are competencies measured by standardized federal examinations. There were however six students who did not graduate. They were for the most part students in public assistance, which suggests that this group of students experienced many more difficulties and barriers in their life that prevents them from committing to the training program. On the other hand the program might have been less able to address the myriad needs of these applicants.

The employment rate of recent graduates is also encouraging: Sixty-three percent of graduates or 12 out of 19 graduates were working in the field shortly after graduation, five of them at the agencies where they interned. These numbers speak to the cohesion of the training provided by the program and how well this training matches the needs of employers. Beyond the shear numbers, a paraprofessional job

represents a significant advance for individuals who have experienced cultural and economic barriers in their lives, because it opens other possibilities besides providing marketable job skills. Getting a job addresses the financial needs of the unemployed and provides students with a more positive sense of self, enabling them to reach a new economic status, and to visualize a better outlook for themselves and their families.

Protocol

Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) Bilingual Vocational Training Program: Direct Care Worker Training

Rationale

The Bilingual Vocational Training Program of the Borough of Manhattan Community College is designed to address the need for contextualized vocational training and language acquisition of the Hispanic community in New York City.

Context

Hispanics are the second largest minority group in the U.S. In New York City, almost a quarter of the population is of Hispanic descend. The latest data indicates that there are 1,783, 511 Hispanics living in NYC. The 1988 per capita income for the Hispanic population was only $ 7,287, while the income for non-Hispanics was $ 12,701. This numbers coupled to the high participation of Hispanics in the labor force indicated that large numbers of Hispanics work at low skill low paying jobs.

Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) has been offering an English Language Immersion Program, and an Employment Opportunity and Support Service since 1993, with relative success. Almost 600 people have been place in subsidized employment through these programs.

BMCC pilot bilingual vocational training program for paraprofessionals in Developmental Disability and Mental Retardation is founded on the premises that there is an increasing need for bilingual paraprofessionals in this area, and that participation in this vocational program represent an upgrade in the skill of the Hispanic labor force, and a transition from the manufacturing sector into the now expanding professional service sector. The Bilingual Vocational Training Program offers a curriculum that integrates English language-acquisition and job-specific training in the area of direct care for disabled patients.

Protocol

The questions are oriented towards determining to what extend the program responds to the needs of the student, or conversely, to what degree the student can obtain the most benefit from the program.

The questions try to elucidate what academic, economic and administrative support is necessary and adequate to provide English proficiency and job-related

training to adult student. In essence we are asking the question: how does the program respond to the needs of a working adult learner? We would like to understand the different concepts articulated in their reports, namely Student centered contextualized instruction, and collaborative learning activities.

In addition, we explore what other administrative and pedagogical adaptations were in place in order to reach the student. Further, the questions attempt to evaluate the motivations and commitment of the students, and the changes that are necessary in their part in order to successfully complete this accelerated program of study.

Questions to instructors

What advantages or strengths do students bring to the classroom?
What are the barriers that students experience?
How does the institution or the program take advantage of the students' strengths?
How does the program ameliorate or compensate for some of the barriers that students experience?
Did you change your approach with this group of students?
Did you do anything new in the classroom, laboratory, or practice?
How was your interaction with the students?
Upon graduation, do you feel these students are as well trained as any in this field?
Is the program designed to bring all the students to the same level of English proficiency or to reach a certain level?
What is the meaning and significance of what the program describes as "student centered contextualized instruction," and "collaborative learning activities."
Can you comment on any striking or outstanding experience occurring during your teaching of this program?

Questions to students

How did you find out about the program?
What did you find attractive about the program?
Have you look into other programs?
What would you add to the program?
What would you take from the program?
What was your experience with the administration?
What was your experience with the faculty?
What was your experience with other students?
Where your family or friends supportive of your efforts?
Where your coworkers or supervisors supportive or encouraging?
Do you feel that the university support is appropriate and sufficient?
Can you comment on the least difficult aspect of this program?
Can you comment on the most difficult aspect of this program?
How did you find a place to do your internship?
What was your experience during the internship?
What did you learn during the internship?
Did you find that there was a good fit between the classroom information and the requirements of the internship?

Are you confident that you can find a job in the Direct Care field?
Was there a good fit between the internship and what you were required to do at your first job?
Do you feel confident with the training you received?
Are you considering taking further classes? Working towards an AA degree? A BA degree?

Questions to the Job Developer

What is your role as a Job Developer?
How do you find internship sites?
How do you introduce the students to the internship administrators?
How do you determine the best fit between students and internship site?
Do you maintain a record of best internship sites?
How do you deal with possible conflicts between students and internship administrators?
How do you take in consideration the particular circumstances of the students' lives?
Once students graduates, do you maintain contact with the students?
What is your interaction with prospective employers for the students?
How is your interaction with current student's employer?

Questions to the Counselors

What is your role as a Counselor?
What are the types of barriers to academic success that students experience?
How does the university deal with the particular circumstance of the students' life?
How do the counselors deal with the particular circumstance of the students' life?
How does the program help students confront some of the barriers to their success?
How can the university help the students overcome barriers to success?
How can the faculty help the students overcome barriers to success?
How can students help themselves and each other overcome some of the barriers to their academic success?
How do you help students negotiate their interaction with employers?
What is the students' response to the workshops?
Can you comment on a particular strength of the program?
Can you comment on a particular shortcoming of the program?

Questions to Program Director

What is your role as director in the development of this program?
What do you believe is the role of this program within the context of the university system?
What is the significance of this program for the Direct Care profession?
What is, in your opinion, the main success or failure of this program?
What are the lessons to be drawn from the first year of the program?
Are there elements of this program that could be integrated into the structure of Direct Care training?
Are there elements of this program that can be integrated into the structure of the university?

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